

PROVIDING ACCESS TO MEDICATIONS AND OTHER TREATMENT FOR OPIOID USE DISORDER IN A DISTRICT COURT: LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE FIRST YEAR OF IMPLEMENTATION



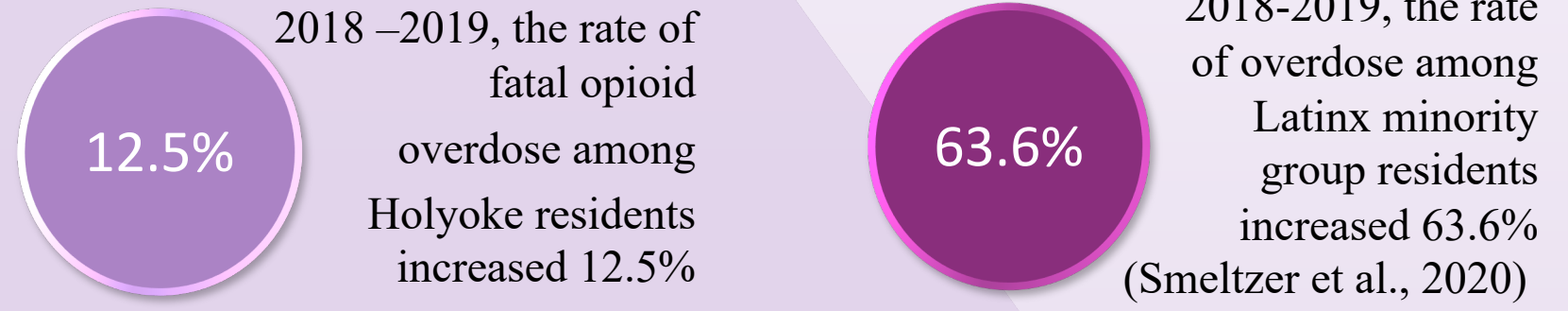
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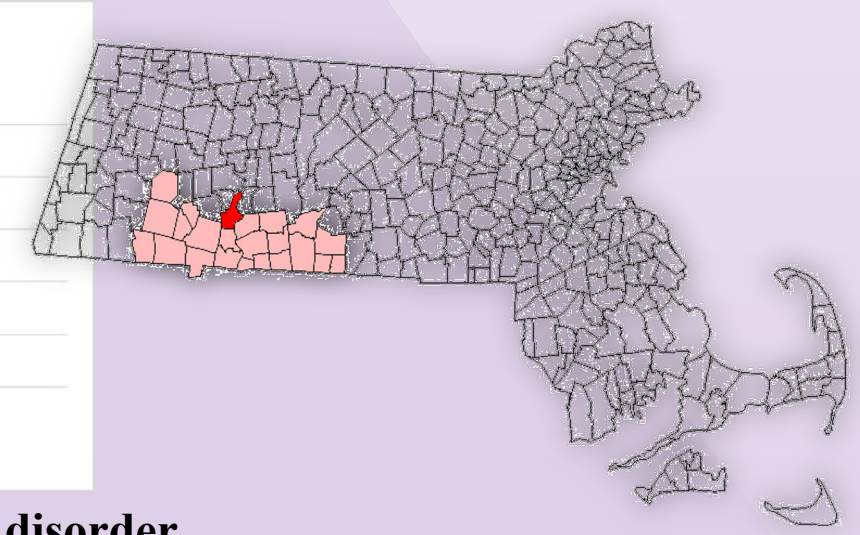
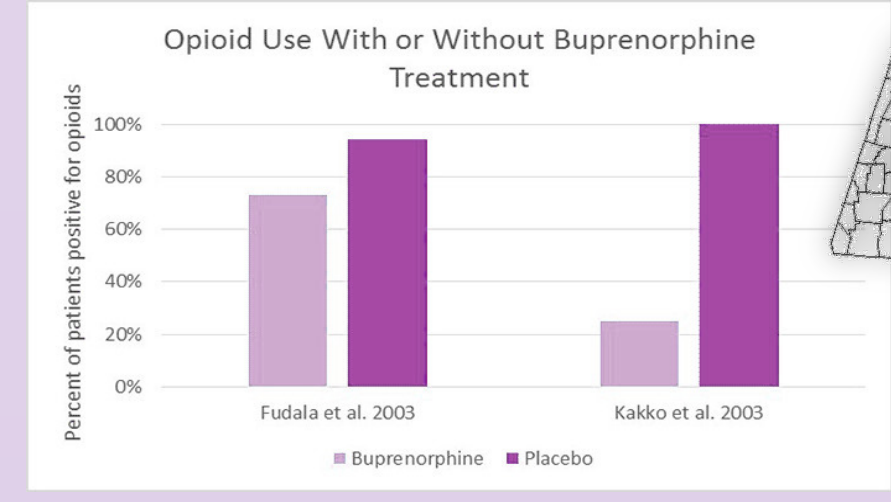
INTRODUCTION

- The Holyoke District Court is among the **first courts nationwide to provide court-involved populations with rapid access to medications for opioid use disorder and other evidence-based treatment during and after court appearances**
- Holyoke Early Access to Recovery and Treatment (HEART)** program utilizes a **multi-sectoral public health approach** to primarily serve a **Latinx population living in communities of concentrated poverty**
- Key partners have worked together since March of 2020 to **re-design the HEART program to incorporate telemedicine and other COVID-19 mitigation policies**
- HEART was successfully launched in **January of this year**

BACKGROUND



- Individuals involved with the criminal justice system**
- Increased risk for substance use, overdose, and other health complications (Binswanger et al., 2013; Pizzicato et al., 2018)



- "Gold standard" treatment for opioid use disorder**
- Medications for opioid use disorder (Brinkley-Rubinstein et al., 2017)
 - Previous programs located at courts have also employed access to a variety of treatment options; HEART differs because it is entirely voluntary and not contingent on sentencing (Buffalo County OIC., Cumberland County OIC)

COVID-19 MITIGATION

- COVID-19 mitigation adaptations**
 - Program was implemented during peak pandemic
 - University-approved daily protocols for interns and intern engagement with participants
- Workflows adapted to include telehealth connections**

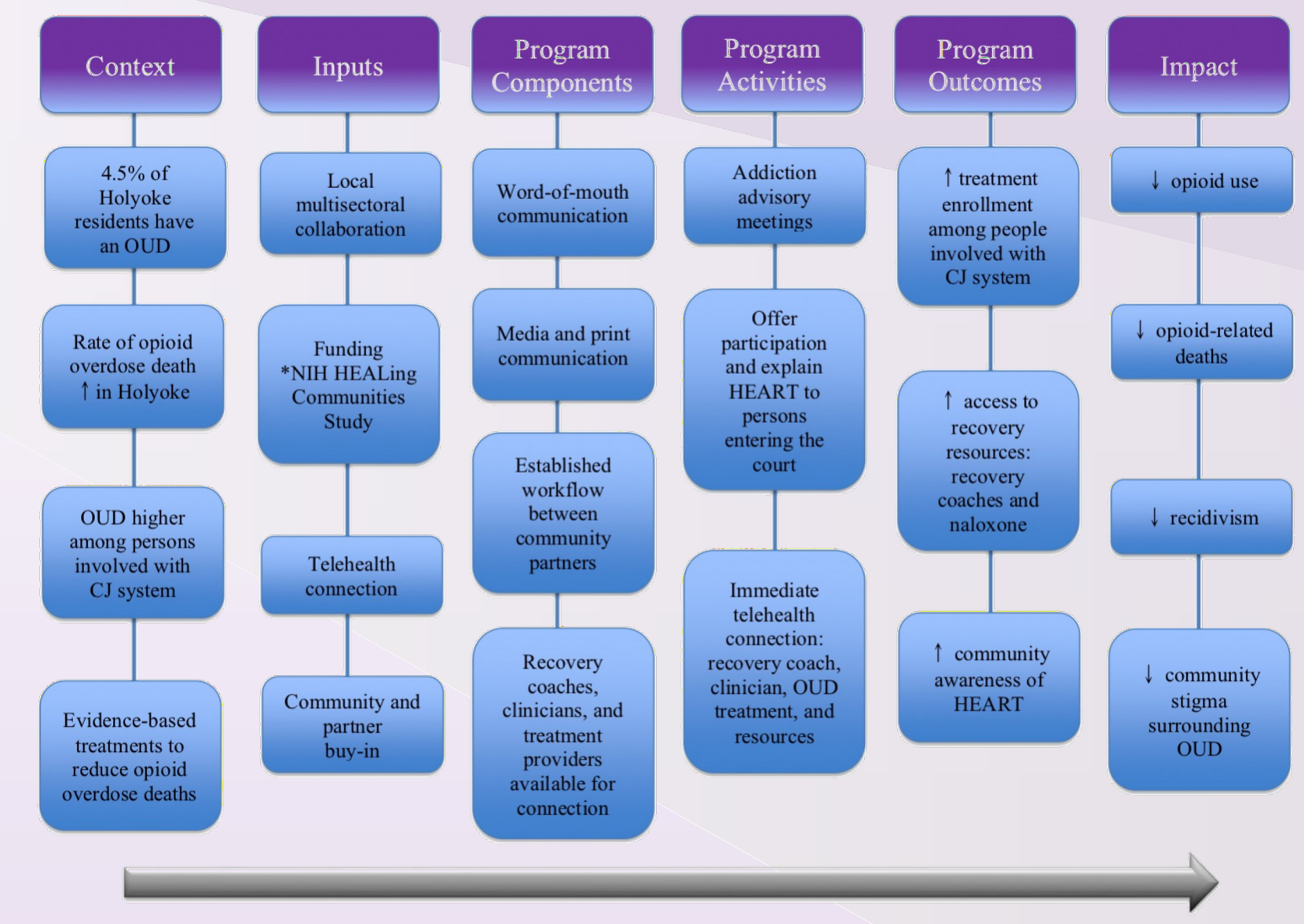
Upon meeting participant
Script: "I'm glad to meet you, [participant name]. I'm _____ and I'm here to _____.
Before we proceed, for our safety:

- Please wear a mask (thank person if wearing a mask, or have person put on a mask if not), and clean your hands (offer hand sanitizer where possible and use yourself).
- Were you asked questions about COVID-19 when you entered the court today?
 - Yes: Checking off this box indicates that the participant was seen in the Holyoke District Court and was screened for COVID-19 prior to interaction with the HEART program. Proceed to engagement.
 - No: Proceed to checklist questions below.

1. Do you have a fever, chills, or feel feverish today?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
2. Are you experiencing new or worsened respiratory symptoms, such as runny nose, nasal congestion, cough, sore throat or shortness of breath that is not related to known seasonal allergies?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
3. Have you had any new occurrences of any of the following symptoms: loss of sense of taste or smell, muscle aches, diarrhea, nausea, vomiting, fatigue, repeated shaking with chills, or a rash?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
4. In the past 14 days, have you been in close contact with someone who is confirmed as having COVID-19?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
5. In the past 14 days, have you traveled outside of Massachusetts?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
6. (Select "yes" only if travel to higher-risk states per https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-travel-order-lower-risk-states .)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

IF YES TO ANY OF THESE QUESTIONS, POLITELY SUSPEND ENGAGEMENT, AND CONTACT YOUR INTERN SUPERVISOR.

THE HEART PROGRAM



Logic Model

- Depicts relationships among the resources, activities, outputs, and outcomes/impacts of the program
- Illustrates how the program activities will translate into desired outcomes

Program Materials

- To engage participants and provide information
- Program handouts
- Naloxone handouts
- MassHealth handouts

Facilitators

- (1) Ability of court staff to act as program champions
- (2) Ability to achieve common understanding of program goals
- (3) Cross-sector buy-in regarding the need for innovative solutions to address the opioid epidemic
- (4) Regular communication among key partners

Challenges

- (1) Defining new collaborative roles and responsibilities
- (2) Physical space, security, and COVID-19 mitigation protocols
- (3) Coordination and information exchange between the court and treatment providers
- (4) Technical infrastructure
- (5) Processes to assess participant flow and program success while abiding by data confidentiality regulations
- (6) Engagement of vulnerable populations

Anticipated benefits

- Increased access to and use of medication for opioid use disorder and other needed healthcare
- Fewer overdose events and avoidable premature deaths
- Strengthened collaboration between the criminal justice system, healthcare, and community-based agencies

NEXT STEPS

- Systems level collaboration and implementation science**
 - HEART as a growing, changing innovation
- Towards health equity: addressing complex health needs**
 - Additional resources for persons with co-occurring conditions and Latinx minority groups
- Program monitoring and evaluation**
 - Short-term goal:** track participant progress
 - Long-term goal:** foundation for replicable program
- Sustaining program implementation**
 - Seeking funds to support program
 - Re-opening of courts due to vaccine roll-out will increase participant traffic

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Our work with HEART would not be possible without the following partners:

- Honorable William P. Hadley and Clerk Magistrate Manuel Moutinho of the Holyoke District Court
- Hope for Holyoke
- Holyoke Health Center
- Behavioral Health Network
- Boston Medical Center's HEALing Communities Study
- All Inclusive Support Services
- New England Public Health Training Center Health Equity Internship Program
- Holyoke Police Department
- Holyoke Medical Center

For More Information

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Key Program Activities

- Program is communicated to, and available to, anyone who has a matter at the court
- The intern will use the telemedicine computer to **connect the participant via Zoom with a recovery coach**
- The intern will use the telemedicine computer to **connect the participant via Zoom to a clinician**
- Based on the next steps as identified by the clinician during screening and assessment, the intern will use the telemedicine computer to **connect the participant via Zoom to the identified treatment provider**

HOLYOKE EARLY ACCESS TO TREATMENT & RECOVERY
WHAT IS THE PROGRAM?

- Anyone who enters the court can choose to be connected with **immediate** help for opioid use disorder
- Get connected with **any** type of treatment for opioid use disorder
- Get connected with **peer support** for recovery
- Get connected with **naloxone** (Narcan)

HOW DOES IT WORK?

How to get naloxone from a pharmacy?
Go directly to a pharmacy and ask for naloxone (no prescription needed)

- If you have MassHealth, naloxone is cost-free *you can only access naloxone three times per year on MassHealth, through a pharmacy
- If you have other insurance, your co-pay may vary

NALOXONE (NARCAN) ACCESS MAP

Laws and Regulations:

METHODS

- Semi-structured audio-recorded interviews with HEART program planners (n=15)**
 - Plan for screening, assessment, and linkage
 - Explore opportunities for collaboration
 - Identify implementation barriers and facilitators and how to resolve them
 - Assess goals and expected benefits of the program
- Weekly "planning and implementation" meetings** with multi-sectoral key collaborators including members of district court and community health partners
- Review of documents, news, and subsequent literature**